

PROCESS IMPROVEMENT & WIIFM

What's In It For Me?

BY: ROBERT SCHWARZ – TOTAL QUALITY SYSTEMS SOFTWARE INC.

Which process do you favor? ISO 9000, Baldrige (EFQM in Europe), Lean Manufacturing, Six Sigma or?

Each of these will not meet their potential or may just fail if you do not pay close attention to **WIIFM** in all of the initiatives you initiate. All involve employees as individuals or in teams. All involvement creates competition. People competing for recognition and praise create some critical needs:

Let's look at three examples in a manufacturing environment and **WIIFM** for each participant:

1. **LINE SUPERVISOR** - Seeks harmony in their department and ready accomplishment of the assigned goals. The supervisor must also be fair, NOT have favorites, and provide recognition for accomplishment. The line Supervisor is also seeking praise and recognition. In many organizations they are spread very thin and have meeting production quotas a number one priority.
2. **SENIOR MANAGEMENT** - Seeks workforce retention, high performance meeting established goals. They are also involved in praise and recognition. They also seek recognition for their excellent performance.
3. **LINE WORKER** - Seeks the satisfaction of having their ideas respected. They also seek a process for sharing their ideas that prevents them from being stolen. Depending on your culture, they also assume recognition and possibly rewards.

So what is the problem? In one word it is **politics**. Every group I have worked in during my business career was blessed with an abundant share of politicians. These are the employees at all levels that will take credit for other folks creativity. They will take ownership of tasks beyond department workforce capacity. They fudge budgets to keep extra staff so they can step up and say "Give It To Me, I Can Do It." The "I wanna be a hero" drive is powerful.

How can we effectively manage in the face of WIIFM needs and Politicians that steal others accomplishments?

The answer to this is also simple. **Data** – using a software management system that identifies the true contributors. The word 'data' may scare some off, but we need it to properly manage any process. We require a software system to capture and present data in a user-friendly manner. Data will then work for us. A balance of the right reports/graphs is needed that fit the needs of the people receiving the information. You could create your own system but I would recommend looking at off-the-shelf solutions first as they typically are much more cost effective and can be implemented immediately.

Every executive knows of the need to recognize and reward. The executives with experience also know the fear of recognizing the wrong person for an accomplishment. The backlash from this can be embarrassing and devastating to morale. Again, the answer is **data** that identifies the individual or department responsible for both success and failure.

The solution is an Integrated Management System that captures the needed information and tracks resolution for any process that deals with problems, innovation or other key projects. This can include:

- ◆ 1 Corrective Actions
- ◆ 2 Management Defined Projects
- ◆ 3 Continuous Improvement (CI) or Kaizen
- ◆ 4 Employee Suggestion Systems or Schemes
- ◆ 5 Team Projects or Activities
- ◆ 6 Supplier Teams or Keiratsu Type Processes
- ◆ 7 Suggestions/Complaints from Customers.

We want to collect the right amount of information into the management system. This provides a clear picture of what is going on and who is involved. Typically, we will use an on-line system such as a fully interactive intranet web site for data access. Items might include:

- 1 Who was responsible for resolving the corrective action? Why did it happen in the first place?
- 2 Which ideas or projects are overdue?
- 3 Did ideas solve or support business goals and strategies?
- 4 Overall statistics: The highest total value in savings? The top ideas ideas/projects with highest total savings?
- 5 Information on participants: Who has submitted the most ideas? Who had the most impact to the organization? How long is taking for someone or a team to analyze/resolve an idea?
- 6 Information for a specific facility, department or work area: Which department initiated the process that needed correction? What are the totals for each department? What are the costs caused by each department? Which supervisor has the most ideas submitted by their group?
- 7 Did ideas make effective use of training provided to support problem solving?
- 8 Was the same idea recognized and rewarded a year ago?
- 9 What ideas could bear assignment to a team for resolution?
- 10 Is a team progressing towards their goal effectively. Does the team need intervention to succeed?

There are many other items that can be easily captured. Some may vary by type of business or organization. The goal is to identify a core set of measurements for your organization that will let you manage your local process. Too few measurements and people will find ways of looking good even if they are not performing. Too many and no one will want to wade through the **data**.

From the data of a well-designed management system for process improvement, a Progressive Executive can use the results in many ways. You can:

- 1 Identify individuals who should be recognized and held up as a role model. This includes supervisors and managers that are supporting the process rather than fighting it.
- 2 Justify rewards & recognition based on the results generated by the ideas.
- 3 Identify morale issues and responses to corporate policies.
- 4 Measure training effectiveness.
- 5 See who has led teams that met goals.
- 6 Monitor how all active teams are performing towards goals.
- 7 Recognize suppliers for special contributions.
- 8 Thank and recognize customers for their special contributions.

All of this is done based on **data**. You can be assured that you will not be embarrassed and that there will not be a loss of motivation for further participation.

This is just the beginning of the uses for a **data** based management process. The challenge is to cease the traditional practice of reward based on politics and move to a real **data** system.

Every one except the politicians will thank you.



We at Total Quality Systems Software Inc. can help you implement a user-friendly and effective software management system for innovation and recognition. Our SIM software is in use by hundreds of organizations on an international basis. SIM supports a wide range of solutions. This may be a single workstation installation for a small business or a central web-based client/server database for the largest of organizations.

Robert Schwarz is a world expert in innovation – managing a world-class process for Honeywell, writing several books and founding Total Quality Systems Software Inc in 1986.